



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/509,321	10/06/2004	Mario Martin	A-9239	7540
20741	7590	04/23/2007	EXAMINER	
HOFFMAN WASSON & GITLER, P.C			LOPEZ, CARLOS N	
CRYSTAL CENTER 2, SUITE 522			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2461 SOUTH CLARK STREET			1731	
ARLINGTON, VA 22202-3843				
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS	04/23/2007		PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/509,321	MARTIN, MARIO
	Examiner Carlos Lopez	Art Unit 1731

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 06 October 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>1 IDS</u> . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated Brackmann et al (US 4,953,570). Brackmann discloses a cigarette making hopper. The hopper comprises the claimed column 36 wherein a perforated plate deemed as element 32 is inclined towards a discharge duct as shown in figure 1 and detailed in Col. 5, lines 23ff. The separator/hopper is provided with an entry duct such as 114 and/or the duct formed by plate 32 and roller 34. The claimed feed pipe is deemed as the pipe shown in figure 1 providing the compressed air flowing through perforated plate 32. As for the upper mouth of the column, mesh conveyor 38 is moved substantially transversely to the vertical axis of the column 36 as shown in figure 1 and detailed in Col. 5, lines 27ff.

As for claim 2, it would be inherent that a suction system would overlay the conveyor belt 38 in order provide the noted suction in Col. 5, lines 27ff.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated Okumoto et al (US 4,607,645). Okumoto discloses a cigarette making hopper. The hopper comprises the claimed column 223 wherein a perforated plate deemed as element 215 is inclined towards a discharge duct 217 as shown in figure 2 and detailed in Col. 3,

lines 35ff. The separator/hopper is provided with an entry duct defined by plate 215 and roller 212. The claimed feed pipe is deemed as the pipe 213 shown in figure 2 providing the compressed air flowing through perforated plate comprising the claimed air diffuser, deemed as element 214. As for the upper mouth of the column, mesh conveyor 141 and '141 moves substantially transversely to the vertical axis of the column 223 as shown in figure 2 and detail in Col. 3, lines 40ff.

As for claim 2, suction system 141 would overlying the conveyor belt '141 in order provide the above noted.

As for claim 3, the air diffuser is element 214 noted as a regulating plate to make uniform the air supplied to the perforated plate.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The references in PTO-892 not applied in the above rejections have been cited to show the state of the art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Carlos Lopez whose telephone number is 571.272.1193. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 8am - 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steven Griffin can be reached on 571.272.1189. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


CL